

Falls Church Housing Commission
Thursday, February 16, 2006
Minutes

Call to Order:

Call to order at 7:35 p.m.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present: Joseph Bodmer (Chair), Don Brobst, Eric Timar

Absent: Commissioner Valora Thompson

Staff present: Ms. Quynn Nguyen

Approval of Minutes:

Motion was made by Mr. Bodmer and seconded by Mr. Timar.

New Business:

Community Development Week

Mr. Timar provided the Commission with a general overview of the purpose of Community Development Week. The week is an opportunity for the City to celebrate the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and highlight the activities that CDBG funds in the City. The Commissioners discussed who would accept the Mayor's Community Development Week proclamation at the April 10, 2006 City Council meeting. Mr. Brobst indicated he would be available to accept the proclamation.

Special Exception Application – Read Building

Chair Bodmer indicated his overall support for the project, but indicated he would have like a bit more time before preparing his comments for the City Council. Commissioners Brobst and Timar also support the inclusion of affordable housing (Teacher Workforce Units) within the proposed project. Chair Bodmer noted that this project contains nine (9) affordable housing units.

Old Business

2006 Housing & Community Development Tour

The Commissioners selected April 21st or April 28th for their annual tour of the community. The tour would include rental housing, CDBG projects and Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) communities.

Accessory Dwelling Units (Granny Flats Memo)

The Housing Commission voted to present the memo to Council at the next available opportunity and directed that staff circulate the memo in support of the Economic Development Authority's recommendations for the City's existing accessory dwelling unit guidelines.

Capital Improvement Plan

Chair Bodmer led the discussion of the City's proposed Capital Improvement Plan and provided an overview of the housing items included in the plan. Chair Bodmer indicated that he strongly supports all of the initiatives proposed (\$2 million for affordable housing acquisition/development; \$150,000 for consultant to prepare inventory of available properties to acquire affordable housing.

However, Chair Bodmer expressed concern that the items may not receive support in light of real estate assessment increases and potential change of council seats in the upcoming elections. Chair Bodmer also encouraged the Commissioners to review the staff Housing Needs Report for further background on the need to preserve existing affordable housing.

Other Items

Tax Abatement

Chair Bodmer led the discussion of this item and how it could benefit nonprofit organizations seeking a grant in-lieu or actual property tax abatement from the City. The item will be fully discussed during the joint meeting with the Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) following the conclusion of this Housing Commission meeting. This proposal is timely as a discussion of the City's Community Services Fund (CSF) as the "grant-in-lieu" could be a competitive process combined with the CSF awards process.

The Commissioners also briefly discussed the combination of the CDBG and CSF programs. Chair indicated that the staff report indicated that there is not much savings with combining the two funds. Mr. Brobst indicated that the nonprofits would have less paperwork to prepare with a combined application.

Staff Report:

☐ Affordable Dwelling Unit (ADU) Lottery

Ms. Nguyen invited the Commissioners to participate in the upcoming ADU Lottery on February 27, 2006. The purpose of the lottery is to select one buyer and alternates for the purchase of one town home at the Whittier Park community. The Commissioners were asked to participate as "witnesses" and to literally "select" the buyer names out of the lottery bin. Commissioners Bodmer and Brobst indicated they would attend.

Commissioner Timar indicated he would also try to attend. [Ms. Thompson also indicated she would attend in subsequent discussions with staff]. The Chair encouraged all Commissioners to participate.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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